News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Friday, September 8, 2006

Wyoming West Nile Virus Cases Increase to 31

CHEYENNE ó West Nile virus infections continue to increase around Wyoming with ten more positive cases reported to Wyoming Department of Health officials since last week.

The new test results bring the total number of human West Nile virus infections reported in Wyoming for 2006 to 31 with one death. Twenty-three of the cases have been in Fremont County. Statewide, nine horses and eight birds have also tested positive for the virus this year.

Most people infected with West Nile virus never develop symptoms. Of those who do develop clinical illness, symptoms typically include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. A very small percentage of infected persons develop West Nile neuroinvasive disease (meningitis or encephalitis) with symptoms such as severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis.

People experiencing West Nile virus-related symptoms should contact a healthcare provider. The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory offers free West Nile virus testing for healthcare providers with suspected cases.

Mosquitoes spread West Nile virus after they feed on infected birds and then bite people, other birds and animals. The õ5 Døsö of West Nile virus prevention are:

- 1) DAWN and 2) DUSK Most mosquitoes prefer to feed at dawn or dusk, so avoid spending time outside during these times.
- 3) DRESS 6 Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when spending time outdoors. Clothing should be light-colored and made of tightly woven material
- 4) DRAIN ó Mosquitoes breed in shallow, stagnant water. Reduce the amount of standing water in or near your property by draining and/or removing it.
 - 5) DEET 6 Use an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

More information on preventing West Nile virus is available on the web at www.badskeeter.org or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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